

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph on page 13, lines 1-13, with the following amended paragraph:

--The metal-oxidizing agent may include hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2), nitric acid, potassium periodate, hypochlorous acid, ~~or~~ ozone water, and the like. In the case when the substrate is a silicon substrate having devices for integrated circuits, any contamination due to alkali metals, alkaline earth metals or halides is not desirable, and hence oxidizing agents containing no nonvolatile component are preferred. Ozone water may greatly cause a compositional change with time. Accordingly, among the oxidizing agents listed above, hydrogen peroxide is most preferred. However, oxidizing agents containing a nonvolatile component may be used when the substrate is a glass substrate having no semiconductor devices.--